

Application No. 09/481,163
Amendment "A" dated July 11, 2003
Reply to Office Action mailed April 28, 2003

REMARKS

Applicant and applicant's attorney express appreciation to the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the recent interview held on July 11, 2003. The claim amendments made by this paper are consistent with the proposed claim amendments discussed during the Interview.

In the most recent Office Action, dated April 28, 2003, claims 1 and 10-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Hooks (U.S. Pat. No. 4,463,380), claims 2-9 and 13 were objected to for depending on a rejected independent claim (claim 1), claims 33 and 37 were objected to for other informalities and claims 14-32 and 34-36 were allowed. By this paper, claim 6 has been cancelled and claims 1, 33 and 37 have been amended¹. Accordingly, claims 1-5 and 7-37 now remain pending.

As reflected above, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claim 6, which was objected to for depending on a rejected independent claim. Inasmuch as the Examiner stated that claim 6 would be allowable if it was rewritten in independent form, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 should now be found allowable for at least incorporating the subject matter of claim 6 into independent claim 1, from which it originally depended.

The remaining claim amendments made by this paper correct informalities that were objected to in the Office Action. In particular, claim 33 has been amended to replace the claim language "comprises a only one" to "comprises only one" and the claim dependency of claim 37 has also been amended, such that claim 37 now properly depends from independent claim 31.

Certain amendments have also been made to the specification to promote consistency between the specification and the drawings (see the paragraph beginning on page 14, line 14), to correct minor grammatical errors (see the paragraph beginning on page 18, line 15) and to provide a missing serial no. for a patent application that is incorporated by reference within the specification (see the paragraph beginning on page 20, line 6).

Inasmuch as the claim amendments resolve all rejections and objections of record, Applicant respectfully submits that the application and pending claims 1-5 and 7-37 are now in

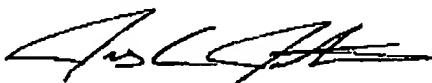
¹ It will be appreciated, that the claim amendments should not be construed as acquiescing to the purported teaching and prior art status of the art of record (e.g., Hooks). Rather, amendments have been made to advance the prosecution of the allowable subject matter identified by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicants reserve the right to challenge the purported teaching and prior art status of the art of record, at any appropriate time, should it arise.

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condition for prompt allowance. In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 11th day of July, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,



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